

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1. (Currently Amended) A print control apparatus for performing user authentication processing in print processing, ~~characterized by~~ comprising:
 - a job combination unit for combining a plurality of print jobs into a single combined print job; ~~and~~
 - a request unit for issuing a request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for ~~getting a~~ obtaining permission to print the single combined print job combined by said job combination unit~~[[,]]; and~~
 - ~~wherein if the authentication request succeeds~~ a transmission control unit in which a printer driver controls a transmission process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not transmitted to the printer and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application.
2. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, ~~characterized by~~ further comprising a counting unit for counting a print amount including

[the] a number of prints to be printed by the combined print job, and transmitting information about the counted print amount to a counting server.

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1,
~~characterized in that~~
wherein the authentication server and the print control apparatus are
connected via a communication network, and
the communication network is connected to a plurality of printers.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the authentication server is [provided by a] included in the
printer.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1,
~~characterized in that~~ wherein the print control apparatus includes a host computer.

6. (Currently Amended) A print control method of performing user
authentication processing in print processing, ~~characterized by~~ comprising:
[the] a job combination step of combining a plurality of print jobs
into a single combined print job; and

[the] an authentication request step of issuing an authentication request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for obtaining permission to print the single print job combined in the job combination step[[,]]; and

~~wherein if the authentication request succeeds~~ a transmission control step in which a printer driver controls a transmission process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not transmitted to the printer and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 6, ~~characterized by~~ further comprising [the] a counting step of counting a print amount including [the] a number of prints to be printed by the combined print job, and transmitting information about the counted print amount to a counting server.

8. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the authentication server is included in [a] the printer.

9. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a computer program for performing user authentication processing in print processing, ~~characterized by~~ including:

a code of [the] a job combination step of combining a plurality of print jobs into a single combined print job; and

a code of [the] an authentication request step of issuing an authentication request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for obtaining permission to print the single combined print job combined in the job combination step[.]; and

~~wherein if the authentication request succeeds~~ a code of a transmission control step in which a printer driver controls a transmission process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not transmitted to the printer and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application.

10. (Currently Amended) The medium according to claim 9, ~~characterized by~~ further comprising a code of [the] a counting step of counting a print amount including [the] a number of prints to be printed by the combined print job, and transmitting information about the counted print amount to a counting server.

11. (Currently Amended) The medium according to claim 9, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the authentication server is [provided by a] included in the printer.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium which, when executed, performs a method for performing user authentication processing in print processing, ~~characterized by including the program comprising:~~

a code of [the] an job combination step of combining a plurality of print jobs into a single combined print job; ~~and~~

a code of [the] an authentication request step of issuing an authentication request, including an input user ID, to an authentication server for obtaining permission to print the single print job combined in the job combination step[[,]]; ~~and~~

~~wherein if the authentication request succeeds~~ a code of a transmission control step in which a printer driver controls a transmission process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not transmitted to the printer and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application.

13. (Currently Amended) A print system for performing user authentication processing in print processing, ~~characterized by comprising:~~

a print control apparatus having a job combination unit for combining a plurality of print jobs into a single combined print job, an authentication request unit for issuing an authentication request, including an input user ID, to an

authentication server for obtaining permission to print the single combined print job combined by the job combination unit, and a transmission control unit ~~if the authentication request succeeds~~ in which a printer driver controls a transmission process so that, when permission is obtained from the authentication server, print data based upon the single combined print job is transmitted to a printer, but when permission is not obtained from the authentication server (i) the print data based upon the single combined print job is not transmitted to the printer and (ii) an indication that permission was not obtained from the authentication server is transmitted to a job accounting application; and

[an] wherein the authentication server is connected to said print control apparatus.

14. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 13, characterized in that ~~the system further comprises~~ comprising a counting server connected to said print control apparatus, and said print control apparatus counts a print amount including [the] a number of prints to be printed by the combined print job, and transmits information about the counted print amount to the counting server.

15. (Currently Amended) The system according to claim 13, characterized in that wherein said authentication server is [provided by] included in one of printers connected to said print control apparatus.

16.- 44. (Canceled)

45. (New) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the printer driver controls the transmission process so as to generate a print command using the combined print job held in a storage unit and transmits the print command to the printer.

46. (New) The method according to claim 6, wherein, in said transmission control step, the printer driver controls the transmission process so as to generate a print command using the combined print job held in a storage unit and transmits the print command to the printer.